Import of Polyurethane Rubber

*252. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any of the manufacturing companies in the country are allowed to import polyurethane rubber which is used for producing foam rubber in place of natural latex concentrates;

(b) whether it has come to the notice of Government that the use of polyurethane rubber in making foam rubbers is banned in western countries as the isocyanates in it is hazardous to human beings; and

(c) whether Government would take steps to ban the import of isocyanates and polyotes for the use of polyurethane foam in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Under the current Export and Import Policy, Polyurethane is freely importable by all persons.

(b) According to information available with the Deptt. of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, ban on the use of or production of Polyurethane foam anywhere in the world, has not come to notice.

(c) There is no proposal at present to ban the import of isocyanates and polyotes for the use of polyurethane foam in the country. However, review of Export and Import Policy is a continuous process and changes in it are made from time to time as and when considered necessary in the public interest.

Welfare schemes for mentally retarded persons

*253. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any steps have taken and schemes drawn up to help mentally retarded persons to stand on their feet, by placing them in occupation or vocations they are considered by specialists to be engaged in;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the mechanisms, if any created to monitor the operation of these schemes; and

(d) the number of such persons who have been engaged in such suited occupations during the past three years?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) and (b) The subject of Relief to the disabled and unemployable is the responsibility of the State Governments under Entry 9 in List II (State List). The Ministry of Welfare, Government of India plays a supporting and coordinating role.

The thrust of all the programmes/schemes implemented by the Ministry of Welfare for handicapped welfare is to bring the disabled persons including mentally retarded persons in the mainstream of life. Major programmes/schemes of the Ministry of Welfare for achieving the objective mentioned above, are as follows:—

(1) *Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for the Disabled*

Under this scheme, assistance is provided to Voluntary Organisation to undertake various kinds of welfare activities for the disabled including mentally retarded. The activities may be aimed at prevention of disability, education and rehabilitation of disabled persons including mentally retarded. Financial support is given to the extent of 90% of the total project cost for recurring items like staff salary, maintenance charges, contigencies and non-recurring items like construction of building, equipments, furniture. Financial assistance is given for the projects such as vocational training centres, special

schools, counselling centres, hostels, training centres for personnel, placement services etc.

(2) *Establishment and Development of Special Schools*

The scheme envisages assistance to the NGOs. to the extent of 90% for establishment and upgradation of special schools in four Major disabilities areas—orthapaedic, hearing and speech, visual and mentally retarded. Priority under the scheme is given for setting up of schools in districts where there are no special schools at present. Both recurring and non-recurring expenditure is supported by the Ministry.

(3) *Assistance to Organisations for Persons with Cerebral Palsy and Mental Retardation.*

Under the scheme, assistance is given to NGOs, upto the extent of 100% for running training courses for teachers in the area of Cerebral Palsy & Mental Retardation.

(4) *National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad.*

In order to effectively deal with the multi-dimensional problems of the handicapped population, National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped has been set up at Secunderabad. This Institute is apex level organisation in the field of training, vocational guidance, counselling, research, rehabilitation, development of suitable service placement and self-employment modules for the mentally retarded. This Institute also serves as a premier documentation and information centre in its area of disability.

(5) *National Trust for the welfare of Persons with Mental Retardation & Cerebral Palsy*

A statutory National Trust for the welfare of Persons with Mental Retardation & Cerebral Palsy is proposed to be set up shortly. The Trust will provide total care to persons with mental retardation and cerebral palsy and also manage the properties, bequeathed to the Trust.

(6) *National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation*

A National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation to promote economic developmental activities and self-employment for the beneficiaries is proposed to be operationalized shortly.

(c) The activities of the National Institute for Mentally Handicapped are monitored through the meetings of the Executive Committee and General Council. Its Annual Report is laid in Parliament and its accounts are open to audit by C&AG. The other schemes are implemented through NGOs whose work in this regard is inspected periodically by the State Government/Union Territory officials, and release of future grants depends on a favourable recommendation from the State Government/Union Territory Administration based on the Inspection.

(d) The total number of beneficiaries under the three schemes, namely Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for the Disabled, Establishment & Development of Special Schools and Assistance to Organisations for the development of Manpower in the field of Cerebral Palsy and Mental Retardation during the last three years is as follows:—

Scheme	No. of beneficiaries		
	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for the Disabled	60161	141615	118268
Establishment and Development of Special Schools	295	2731	1675
Assistance to Organisations for the Development of Manpower in the field of Cerebral Palsy and Mental Retardation.	102	336	160

This number includes mentally handicapped also. However, no figures

are avilable regarding the number of mentally handicapped persons actually engaged in suitable occupations.

Pending cases in the Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Court and State level Labour Courts

*254. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of cases are pending in the Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Court and State level Labour Courts for a long time;

(b) if so, the lates position in this regard;

(c) the reasons for pendency of these cases; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government for expenditious trial of the pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (d) As on 30.9.1996, 6,049 Industrial disputes and 4833 applications were pending before Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Courts set up by the Central Government. In the States and Union Territory of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Pondicherry, Manipur, Punjab, Haryana and Daman and Diu 42,181 industrial disputes and applications were pending as on 31.12.1995. In the remaining States, except the States of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh for which information is not available, 3,55,428 Industrial disputes and applications were pending as on 30.6.96.

Major reasons for pendency are:—

(i) Almost all the disputes are now required to be referred to the Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Courts in confirmity with the direction of the Supreme Court;

(ii) vacancies in the post of Presiding Officers from time to time;

(iii) procedural impediments; and

(iv) shortage of Labour Courts in State/Union Territories.

While effecting procedural changes with a view to expediting disposal of cases is a continuous process, some of the more important steps taken recently in this regard are as follows:—

— norms for disposal of cases by the Presiding Officers have been fixed;

— while old cases are accorded priority, fresh cases are being assigned to the Courts having lesser pendency;

— parties to the disputes are discouraged to seek adjournments and where unavoidable, short duration adjournments are allowed. They are also impressed upon to complete all formalities as expeditiously as possible;

— additional labour courts are being created keeping in view the overall pendency and subject to financial constraints;

— efforts are being made to improve the service conditions of the post of Presiding Officers; and

— efforts are being made to fill up vacancies in the post of Presiding Officers on priority basis.

Number of Girls' Hostels for tribal girls run by Government

*255. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Girls' Hostels in the country for the tribal girls run by Government.

(b) whether Government are aware that those hostels are facing several problems including lack of funds in their running; and